

# The Liberal

10101 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, L4C 4Y6 Ontario

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The Liberal is published every Wednesday by Metrospan Publishing Limited — North Division, which also publishes The Banner in Aurora-Newmarket and the Woodbridge Vaughan News.

K. J. LARONE, PRESIDENT,  
Metrospan Publishing Limited

## Fallible, human media message is not God's voice

Just about everyone these days depends upon the public information media to keep in touch with the world around, be it the local community or the national scene.

But also just about everyone fails to fully grasp the real nature and limitations of that media until direct and personal contact is made with it in a real life situation.

Every member of the press gets jolted from time to time with a reminder of what might be called a 'realization gap' among readers. The situation is no different for a weekly newspaper in this regard.

For the weekly newspaper person the reminder usually comes in the form of a startled reader who doesn't fully understand the nature of the newspaper medium and its limitations, both human and physical.

There is a constant process of 'getting to know you' that goes on between the reader and the newspaper. Probably newspapers should more often make an effort to explain just what is in their columns and what is not.

Certainly this newspaper and its readers are no exception in this regard.

However, with all its limitations, the newspaper is still probably the best weapon the populace has against ignorance, prejudice, rumor and mob violence. Yet the truth hurts, quite often.

And even more does falsehood hurt.

Unfortunately newspapers, and this one is included, may sometimes contain a falsehood. Humans write and edit the news, and humans make mistakes.

As it happens, correcting such a mistake is often just about the toughest job a news person has to do in his working day. But correct

## A local heritage worth preserving

Back in 1861 a resident of Richmond Hill gave his grandson a set of Rules To Go Through Life By which stated:

"I would never use tobacco, snuff or whisky, brandy or wine or anything that would not add to my comfort.

"Never waste time in bed or in idle or useless employments, or especially in bad company.

"Always rise early and earn my breakfast if possible before I ate it.

"Never to purchase anything that was not serviceable to me or that was not very like to rise in value.

"And above all, keep out of debt as much as possible.

"Never give a cross or unkind answer or word when a kind and pleasant one would answer as well.

"Always assist everybody I can with good advice and little acts of kindness. For instance, if in a house where I was boarding, bring in a pail of water, or wood or help milk the cows or help to churn, or anything else that came in the way.

"Spend leisure hours reading and especially the Bible and the Proverbs of Solomon often and the Book of Deuteronomy and other parts of the Bible.

them he must.

The original reporter should be contacted, and then the editor, if necessary in such a case.

If it is a simple printing error, or error of fact, then a printed correction of similar prominence is in order. If the mistake is due to lack of additional, or more comprehensive information, then a further story will usually be printed upon request.

However, often there may be a matter of opinion or point of view involved. Then the reader will be invited to put forward the matter in a letter to the editor.

Probably no newspaper ever has enough of these letters. Certainly this newspaper never does and always looks for more.

Of course the letter writer must include name and address, while also being available in person or by telephone if something must be checked. Sometimes very good letters go unpublished because they cannot be verified.

Readers unfortunately sometimes take the news stories or headlines as reflections of the opinion of the newspaper, its editor or staff. This should never be the case.

News columns are supposed to contain only information about what is seen, or heard, which is of use and interest. Within the bounds of lawfulness, available space, decency, good taste and reader interest the news columns are open to every point of view.

Bylines at the beginning of a story or column are to identify the writer where personal opinions are being expressed, or where the editor feels the quality of the story is such that the writer deserves to be identified.

Only in the editorials on the Editorial Page, or in special instances elsewhere in a clearly identified editorial, does the editor put forward his newspaper's opinion.

"These are such rules and principles I have endeavored to act on for 44 years."

The writer was Rowland Burr. The recipient was his grandson, also Rowland Burr. And the year was 1861.

But the good advice contained is still applicable today.

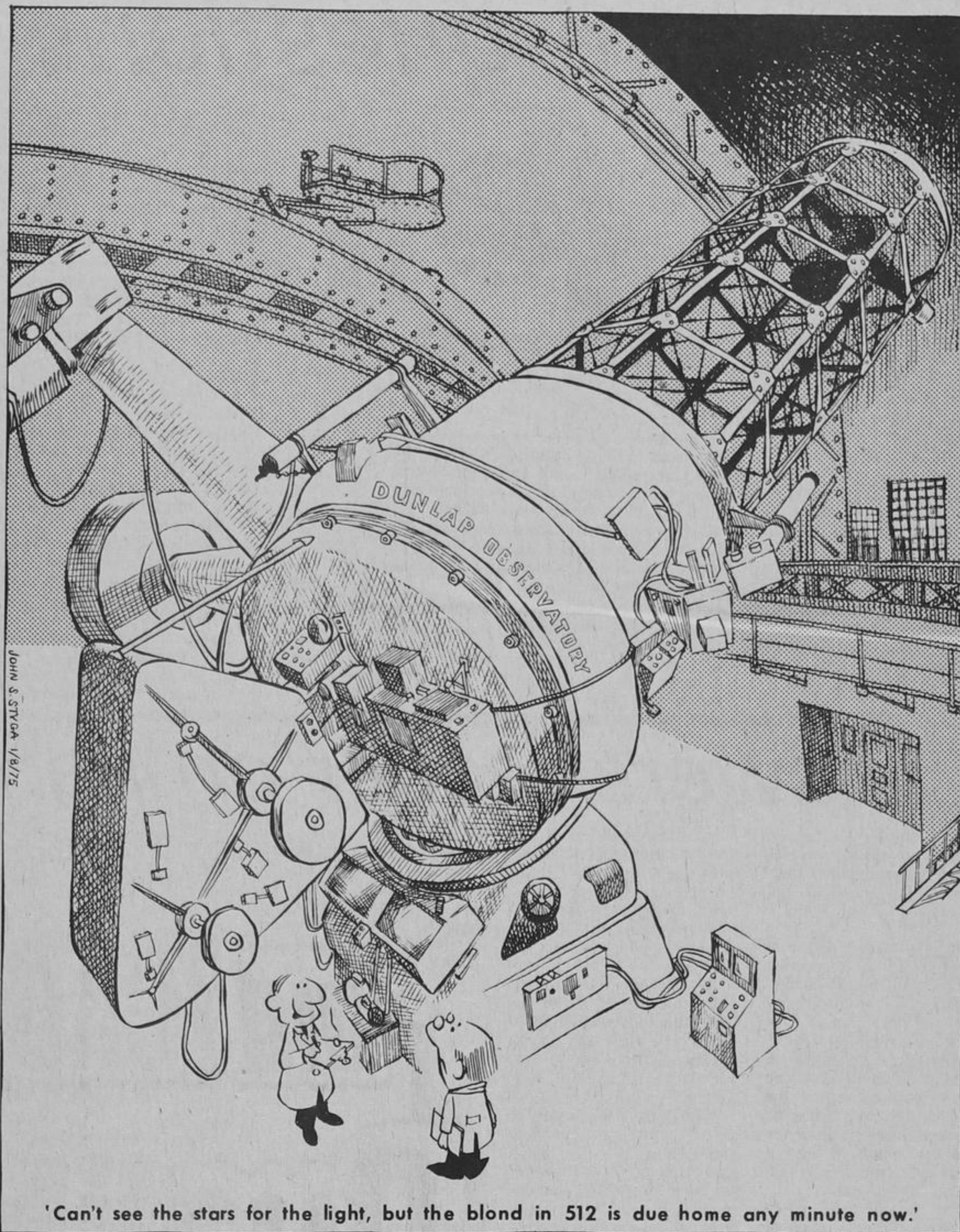
Rowland Burr's home still stands on Carrville Road and became the property of the Town of Richmond Hill a couple of years ago.

The year-old Richmond Hill Historical Society has agreed with the town to take on the responsibility of restoring the home, which dates back to 1817.

This is the oldest remaining building in the town. It provides a link between the present and the days of the pioneers which society members' do not want to see severed.

If you agree with them and would like to see a part of our heritage preserved, your presence at the society's annual meeting February 17 at 8 pm in the Richmond Hill Public Library on Wright Street will be most welcome.

You will be able to contribute your ideas on how this restoration and preservation can be accomplished.



'Can't see the stars for the light, but the blond in 512 is due home any minute now.'

## Viewpoint from the regional desk



BY JIM IRVING

News item: Newmarket — Xaveria Hollander, also known as The Happy Hooker, will be working in town Thursday night.

The world-famous prostitute-turned-auteur (their word, not mine) will be at the Odeon Newmarket theatre to promote the showing of her film and to autograph copies of her book in the theatre lobby.

"I think it's a big thing for Newmarket to have the star of a movie appear in our town," commented theatre manager Bob Brown. "It's a big step in our future."

Several light years ago when I was a lad growing up — or at least pretending to — in what was euphemistically known as the Queen City of the Plains; romantically as The Home of the Mounties; and statistically as Regina, capital of Saskatchewan, the world premiere of a movie was held in our town.

It was called "Northwest Mounted Police," and still is whenever it turns up on the very late show, usually the last entry of the night just before the morning programming begins.

It wasn't exactly vintage Fellini, nor even an accurate portrayal of the famed men in scarlet, but to a small city, which had often found its broad skies clouded by dust and armadas of grasshoppers en route to devastate what was left of fields of not-so-waving wheat — waving would be more like it — it was an occasion to rival anything from Rome's greatest days.

Most of the stars were there. The most beautiful Madeleine Carroll — where has that kind of face disappeared to? — Robert Preston, Preston Foster and Lynne Overman. The great Gary Cooper and the gamine-like Paulette Goddard didn't make it, but it was still a pretty good representation.

And when they rode down the streets in open cars and waved and signed autographs — we kids would run alongside the cars and when they stopped or slowed down for a second, would thrust our books under their occupants' noses — we all felt as if fortune had singled us out for special attention.

Of course you knew it had all really

happened because of the Mounties, but still it was nice to think that the whole city was being honored. Also, the whole city was part of the festivities, erecting that wooden palisade at the city hall; in fact, bedecking the whole place so that it gave the impression of a besieged fort that needed the likes of Preston and company to rescue it from whatever terrors were at its doors.

Recall isn't such that one remembers what the local theatre manager said about it, or even what comment was in the papers. But no doubt it was something akin to what the manager of the Newmarket theatre is quoted as saying on the occasion of its own momentous visit from the so-called "star of a movie".

Both of these nouns are open to question and one even feels reluctant to include Madeleine Carroll and Xaveria Hollander in the same story, less Miss Carroll becomes tainted in the process. But the differences in that premiere of many years ago and the front page offering in Newmarket last week, are what this piece is all about.

One would be inclined to think that the theatre manager would sneak out the back door and go away until the event was over, instead of bragging to the local Quakers that the biggest thing in their lives right now was the personal appearance of a former hustler, who would be autographing books in the theatre lobby for anyone silly enough to come.

What does someone such as The Happy Hooker write as a dedication, anyway? "See you in bed," X.H.; "From your undercover(s) cutie," H.H.; "By hooker by crook, I'll be first in your book," X.

Somehow her appearance doesn't quite stir the blood, as did that visit of those real movie stars of a much different era. And it's difficult to picture any little kids running alongside her car to get an autograph — middle-aged men, perhaps.

But could be things are such in Newmarket that — with the exception of the paper coming out every Tuesday — there's not much to look forward to, and The Happy Hooker is the pinnacle of cultural attainment.

## Bird box workshop in March

Although starlings seem to be the major occupants of bird boxes in this area, successful nestings of bluebirds, swallows, wood ducks and hooded mergansers have also been reported.

Young birds successfully raised in these boxes probably seek similar nesting facilities the following spring and most likely in the same locale. The bird box assembly

project has been sponsored for the last few years by Maple district of the ministry of natural resources.

A nesting box workshop will be conducted again at Maple in mid-March this year. People (naturalists, sportsmen's clubs, individuals) interested in participating are asked to telephone Maple 832-2261-ext. 270) or write to the

District Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources, Maple.

The number of participants will be restricted and it will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The exact date will be set later and those participating will be notified of this.

After the boxes have been assembled the participants place them on suitable sites of their choice.

# Opinion

## School trustee salary raise was irresponsible

(Guest editorial from the Weston-York Times Mirror)

North York school trustees' recent decision to double their honorariums is an insult to the electorate.

Led by Chairman Dave Logan, school board members voted themselves a \$300-a-month pay increase at their first regular meeting since the December municipal election.

In addition to the increase in trustee earnings, Logan — who proposed the raise — will receive another \$150 a month as board chairman, bringing his total earnings as a North York trustee to \$10,800.

While arguing in favor of the raise, trustees spoke of the great responsibility involved in running one of the largest school boards in Canada.

But ratifying a 100 percent pay raise immediately after an election can in no way be labelled responsible.

Trustees should have supported an increase during the December election campaign, instead of waiting until they were securely in office for another two years before dealing with such a controversial issue.

Or, they should have at least waited a few months, instead of winning the election and then making a pay raise their first priority.

Trustees may be about to face some angry public reaction for increasing their salaries in such an underhanded manner, as did council when it passed 110 percent salary raises immediately after the 1972 municipal election.

Reaction to the council raise was strong enough to prompt a citizens' group to successfully seek an Ontario Supreme Court ruling that the increases were illegal.

Although council later obtained a raise through legal channels, the adverse reaction made one thing clear. The public will not tolerate newly-elected public officials raising their salary immediately upon election.

Now, school board has done the same thing, without advance warning and without giving voters a chance to speak on the matter.

We can only hope this irresponsible action will not set a precedent to be followed by members of future school boards.

## 'All York Region's not a bed'

But that would be a too harsh, as well as undeserving indictment of a fine town. More likely, it's just that it, too, like the rest of the world, has been caught up in the casual standards of the day, so that not only anything goes, but bank robbers and streetwalkers live for ever after on their past. In fact, even attain a kind of respectability from it.

And why not? The great liberals say, as they prepare their own progeny — through a program of permissiveness and 20th Century enlightenment — for possibly the same sort of careers some day; why not? Let him who is without sin, etc. . . .

We are all prone to temptation in all its various come-ons. But that doesn't mean we have to publicly endorse our fallibility or anyone else's, putting it on a plane as something worthwhile, maybe even culminating in a movie about ourselves someday.

Making a virtue of the world's oldest profession — newspaper business, apparently, is the second oldest, although not so well paying — makes it difficult for people in the so-called square world to give things their best shot.

What's the point? They seem to say. You get more recognition and make it a lot faster through notoriety, especially when it's all been given a nice white-washed acceptance by society's benevolent brush.

After all, for society to act any differently would indicate some sort of hypocrisy or narrow mindedness on its part. Heaven forbid, it should ever be so maligned.

Instead, let's just let the madman grow; let violence be preached in the movies and TV; let's all consider the abnormal to be the norm; its acceptance another step along the way to the eventual liberation of our stilted selves.

And when people such as The Happy Hooker show up in our midst, let's all rush down to gawk; maybe even request a press conference, as with all visiting celebrities.

"It's a big step in our future," the theatre manager says. "... it's a big thing for Newmarket. . . ."

It seems impossible that someone should see it like that. But apparently a lot of people do; or at least any significance they attach to it, is that it's worthwhile.

But let's hope also, they're in the minority; that they don't more and more take over; that this kind of easy acceptance of such things doesn't always prevail.

That not everyone has to be the same as the Happy Hooker and her like — and take it all lying down.

## YESTER DAYS..

### In 1888 dread disease smallpox still common

By Mary Dawson

Although the smallpox vaccine was available in 1888, the dread disease was still common in this part of the world.

The Liberal of October 11 of that year said scores of cases had been reported to the health authorities in Toronto. But investigation had proven the majority of the reports to be false.

However, eight cases were found within the city limits and one or two each in the neighborhoods of Seaton Village and Lambton Mills.

A case had been reported in Stouffville also, the victim being a street car driver in the city. Most of the city patients were taken to the isolation hospital for care.

It was believed the disease was brought to Toronto from Buffalo, where it was rampant.

The editor expressed gratitude that, to that date, no cases had shown up in Richmond Hill.

However, he advised all residents, particularly children, to have themselves vaccinated since, "There is no guarantee it

will not make its appearance here at any time." He charged parents who failed to have their children vaccinated were negligent of their duties.

Reporting Toronto had a team of physicians going from house to house to vaccinate the populace, he said: "Toronto is by no means a filthy city, therefore the smallpox is not likely to become epidemic. But clean as it is compared to many other large cities, it is far from being perfect in a sanitary point of view."

"The bay, as long as it is used as a receptacle for everything that is foul and unclean, will always be a breeder of disease. And back lanes and alleys will never emit a healthful atmosphere as long as they are the dumping places for decomposed and putrid matter."

A week later it was reported two visitors from Woodstock were slowly recovering from a four week bout of malaria fever in the village. The news item pointed out malaria had been quite prevalent in Woodstock during the past few months.

By November 15 smallpox had reached epidemic proportions at Roche's Point.